

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1           1.     A computer implemented method of sharing information among members of a  
2 group, the method comprising:

3                   storing information about all current members of a group;  
4                   receiving instructions from at least one current member to invite at least one  
5 prospective member to join the group;  
6                   sending an invitation to the prospective member to join the group;  
7                   receiving an affirmative response from the prospective member;  
8                   adding the prospective member to of the group as a new member; and  
9                   automatically updating services to current members to account for the new  
10 member.

1           2.     The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein sending the invitation  
2 comprising using an e-mail message.

1           3.     The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein sending the invitation  
2 comprises using an instant message.

1           4.     The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein sending the invitation  
2 comprises using an on-line chat room.

1           5.     The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein receiving the  
2 affirmative response comprises receiving the response as an e-mail message.

1           6.     The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein receiving the  
2 affirmative response comprises receiving the response as an instant message.

1           7.     The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein receiving the  
2 affirmative response comprises receiving the response in an on-line chat room.

1           8.     The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein automatically  
2 updating services comprises providing a list of current members that includes the new  
3 members.

1           9.     The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein automatically  
2 updating services comprises providing information in an address book that includes address  
3 information for the new member.

1           10.    The computer implemented method of claim 9 further comprising updating  
2 the address book based upon information entered by the current members of the group.

1           11.    The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein automatically  
2 updating services comprises providing information in a calendar that includes information for  
3 the new member.

1           12.    The computer implemented method of claim 11 further comprising updating  
2 the calendar based upon information entered by the current members of the group.

1           13.    The computer implemented method of claim 11 further comprising inviting  
2 current group members to attend an event and automatically recording the event in the  
3 calendar.

1           14.    The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein automatically  
2 updating services comprises providing an on-line forum for current members of the group to  
3 chat with other current members of the group including the new member.

1           15.    The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein automatically  
2 updating services comprises enabling current members of the group to send instant messages  
3 to other current members of the group including the new member.

1           16.    The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein automatically  
2 updating services comprises sharing data files with current members of the group including  
3 the new member.

1           17.    The computer implemented method of claim 16 wherein data files are  
2 provided by the current members of the group.

1           18.    The computer implemented method of claim 16 wherein data files comprise  
2 digital images.

1           19.    The computer implemented method of claim 16 wherein data files comprise  
2 photographs.

1           20.    The computer implemented method of claim 16 wherein data files comprise  
2 text files.

1           21.    The computer implemented method of claim 16 wherein data files comprise  
2 multi-media files.

1           22.    The computer implemented method of claim 1 further comprising offering  
2 new services based upon the current members of the group.

1           23.    The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein automatically  
2 updating services comprises providing information in a buddy list that includes information  
3 for the new member.

1           24.    A communication system for sharing information among members of a group  
2 comprising:  
3                   a group administrator for processing information about the current members  
4 of the group;  
5                   a group communicator cooperating with the group administrator for delivering  
6 and exchanging information with current and prospective group members; and

7 a group information updater cooperating with the group communicator and  
8 group administrator for providing automatically updated services to current members.

1 25. The communication system of claim 24 wherein the group administrator  
2 further comprises:

3 a group member profile server for updating data related to current members;  
4 and  
5 a database connected to the group member profile server for storing data  
6 related to current members.

1 26. The communication system of claim 24 wherein the group communicator  
2 further comprises:

3 an instant message host complex in communication with a client system; and  
4 a login server in communication with a client system and the instant message  
5 host complex for determining whether the client is authorized to access the instant message  
6 host complex.

1 27. The communication system of claim 26 wherein the instant message host  
2 complex further comprises:

3 an instant message server for sending and receiving data; and  
4 a domain server cooperating with the instant message server for providing  
5 supporting functions of the instant message host complex.

1 28. The communication system of claim 27 wherein the instant message host  
2 complex further comprises a routing gateway connected to the instant message server.

1 29. The communication system of claim 24 wherein the group communicator  
2 further comprises:

3 an OSP host complex in communication with a client system; and  
4 a login server in communication with the client system and the OSP host  
5 complex for determining whether the client is authorized to access the OSP host complex.

1           30.    The communication system of claim 26 wherein the OSP host complex further  
2 comprises an OSP server for sending and receiving data.

1           31.    The communications system of claim 24 wherein the group information  
2 updater further comprises a user interface for communicating and exchanging data with a  
3 member of the group.

1           32.    The communications system of claim 31 wherein the user interface resides on  
2 an OSP host complex.

1           33.    The communications system of claim 31 wherein the user interface resides on  
2 the Internet.

1           34.    A graphical user interface for inviting a prospective member of a group to join  
2 the group, the graphical user interface comprising:  
3                   a message inviting the prospective member to join the group;  
4                   the name of the group;  
5                   the current members of the group;  
6                   and a tool for the prospective member to respond to the invitation.

1           35.    A computer program, stored on a computer readable medium, the method  
2 comprising:  
3                   storing information about all current members of a group;  
4                   receiving instructions from at least one current member to invite at least one  
5 prospective member to join the group;  
6                   sending an invitation to the prospective member to join the group;  
7                   receiving an affirmative response from the prospective member;  
8                   adding the prospective member to the group as a new member; and  
9                   automatically updating services to current members to account for the new  
10 member.

1            36.    The computer program of claim 35 wherein the computer readable medium is a  
2    disc.

1            37.    The computer program of claim 35 wherein the computer readable medium is a  
2    client device.

1            38.    The computer program of claim 35 wherein the computer readable medium is a  
2    host device.

1            39.    The computer program of claim 35 wherein the computer readable medium is a  
2    propagated signal.